



French A Level: Developing Cultural Capital, Diversity and Equality

Cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours, and skills that a student can draw upon and which demonstrates their cultural awareness, knowledge, and competence; it is one of the key ingredients a student will draw upon to be successful in a diverse society, their career and the world of work. In the Sixth Form, we aim to build our student aspirations and expose them to a range of experiences to help them achieve goals and become successful individuals who understand and support diversity and equality.

We recognise that for students to aspire and be successful academically and in the wider areas of their lives, they need to be given diverse, rich, and sustained opportunities to develop their cultural capital. We do this in many ways, for example, through our curriculum, extra-curricular activities, trips and visits, careers activities, and PSHE/RSE programme.

There are nine key realms to cultural capital in the Sixth Form at Samuel Whitbread Academy:

Cultural Capital

provides health, well-being and growth



Cultural Capital

lets us share our histories, our memories, the people, the places and the things that matter to us.



Cultural Capital

creates the curiosity and confidence to make connections between the past, the present and the future.



Cultural Capital

sparks generations of innovators.



Cultural Capital

is to be found locally, nationally, globally - everywhere.



Cultural Capital

nurtures inclusive communities.





Cultural Capital
enriches today and
inspires tomorrow.



Cultural Capital
is ours to discover,
ours to create,
ours to share.



Cultural Capital
belongs to me,
belongs to you,
belongs to us all.



These nine realms can be broken down further into the following sub-categories: **Personal development, Social development (including political and current affairs awareness), physical development, spiritual development, moral development, and cultural development.**

What is now outlined are the key areas of both academic and enrichment that take place within and outside of this course area to enhance and develop these diverse elements of cultural capital:

Personal Development:

Personal development consists of activities that develop a person's capabilities and potential, build human capital, facilitate employability, and enhance the quality of life and the realisation of dreams and aspirations.

Element of the curriculum and/or enrichment

We aim for students to build a strong character and firm beliefs that they have a lot to offer to the world around them. Character education is a learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as: respect, justice, citizenship, and responsibility for self and others. Upon such core values, we form the attitudes and actions that are the hallmark of safe, healthy and informed communities that serve as the foundation of our society.

Our curriculum builds on from the GCSE course and instead of focussing on teenage interests, it challenges our young adults to consider the world and the amazing opportunities available to them. When we teach about politics, voting, law and order, or even diversity, we encourage students to think about how they can play a role in society by becoming ambassadors, run small projects with the younger years, or even contact companies for their work experience in year 12.

Students realise their potential when taking part in trips, like it was the case when our cohort a few years ago met the French author Faïza Guène and questioned her in French. Some students became aware of the role played by artists in our society.

In lessons students are challenged and supported to become the best they can be and achieve their full potential. This is usually taking place when they take ownership of their IRP (Independent Research Project).



Social Development:

The process by which a child learns to interact with others around them. As they develop and perceive their own individuality within their community, they also gain skills to communicate with other people and process their actions.

Element of the curriculum and/or enrichment

Learning new skills is an important aspect of the growth of someone's Cultural Capital. This could be something that really pushes you out of your comfort zone and develops both your resilience and patience.

Our curriculum forces students to become great listeners and communicators through a variety of speaking, reading and listening activities. These include group work, debates and interactive listening, peer assessment, reading and comprehension tasks in lessons and at home. Despite being mainly linked to our final exams, these skills enable us to form the young adults of tomorrow by developing and reinforcing key qualities: trustworthy, responsible, respectful, and resilient.

Mainly through the topic of politics and political commitment, we aim for students to reflect on their own personalities and analyse the key features of what makes a citizen. Students are urged to consider the importance of voting and its impact in the world. In addition we discuss the topic of cyber society and its positive and negative influence in our lives: is it all worth it? Students really engage with the topic and the content is used to facilitate discussion in class.

We aim to give confidence to pupils who usually feel isolated or shy, they usually feel valuable as their point of views are heard and explained to give them an opportunity to overcome low self-esteem. Our classes are small and thus it encourages students to share their opinions more easily.

Physical Development:

These are the major motor or physical achievements a student enhances and develops. Physical development is a vital part of growing up as students learn to master control of their body

Element of the curriculum and/or enrichment



Spiritual Development:

The development of the personality towards a religious or spiritual desired better personality.

Element of the curriculum and/or enrichment

Our curriculum offers many opportunities for students to learn, reflect and discuss different religions within the French speaking world around them. It challenges them to see what faith looks like beyond their own borders. Students learn the importance of acknowledging and accepting everyone's faith and its impact on customs, traditions and lifestyle. Students particularly learn about how people's faith in French speaking Africa and Canada have strong family values. It is seen through the way they behave with their families and communities.

We hope students will gain awareness but mostly empathy towards less known ethnicities, and thus religions.

When studying the French film *La Haine* and the French book *Kiffe Kiffe Demain* students uncover how young people in the suburbs of Paris suffer from prejudices, but also how some of them unite despite having different beliefs. They are taught the value and sense of community through integration and successful politics.

Finally, students are free to research a topic on religion for their IRP (Independent Research Project) as previously done by candidates who choose to evaluate the impact of a secular country like France (la laïcité).

Moral Development:

The development of attitudes and behaviours toward other people in society, based on social and cultural norms, rules, and laws.

Element of the curriculum and/or enrichment

Our curriculum offers a variety of units within key themes that challenge students to think about their own behaviours towards other norms, laws and people.

Students learn and discuss the existing precarious situation of homeless and marginalised people and the importance of charity work around the world. This is mainly through the presence of French organisations and groups who support the values of respect, integrity, equality and empathy.

We aim for students to challenge their existing and potential preconceived ideas. The speaking element of the course will provide a stimulus that will provoke strong reactions from our students and they do well to explain, justify and evaluate the importance of building a trustworthy and respectful society in the contemporary world.



Cultural Development:

Cultural Diversity is at the heart of the Sixth Form and students will learn about themselves and relationships with others from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Element of the curriculum and/or enrichment

We aim for students to understand French multiculturalism that is reflected by the 280 million people who speak French worldwide. We believe that the importance of culture lies in its close association with the ways of thinking and living.

“Culture is the sum of all the forms of art, of love, and of thought, which, in the course of centuries, have enabled man to be less enslaved.” ~ Andre Malraux

Our curriculum challenges and supports students to develop an understanding and an appreciation of the Arts in all French speaking countries around the world. Students learn about the birth and evolution of Le 7e Art (cinema), then music but also what makes the French so proud of their cultural and national heritage: their food, their language, architecture and museums, but also their many UNESCO sites that attract so many tourists every year.

When studying French speaking movies and books, students have to develop a critical evaluation of themes and characters who often represent the minorities of French society: les maghrébins et les banlieusards (those who have North African origins and those who live in the suburbs). Studying in details these works will enhance the students’ understanding and appreciation of what makes France such a wonderful and multicultural place. Some students will be able to draw comparisons with their own lives and as a result, will have more meaningful relationships with people around them.

Finally, when undertaking research for their IRP (Independent Research Project), students will need to choose one area of interest. In the past, this has been successful when investigation fashion designers, the influence of the Arabic world into French music, or even the future of the French language when so many words have been influenced by “verlan”.

